

eugenicist agree at least that something must be done, if human society is to survive, and that speedily. The fact that social selection must be slow, and may be 'tedious' (though Professor Ginsberg can hardly know this till he tries) is not a reason for procrastination. Next to inertia, the gravest obstacle that blocks the way to improvement is the ideal of 'liberty,' i.e., the right of the individual to do as he pleases and to damn the consequences.

Yet those who feel thus are most amazingly insensitive to the social pressure which surrounds them, has moulded them, and controls them, for evil rather than good. For the difference between our present society and a rationally organized and eugenical society is, not that in the former the individual is free and in the latter controlled, but that our present organization is so largely random, aimless, inconsistent, and self-frustrating, distracting the individual with monstrous and incompatible demands, and often distorting him almost out of human shape, while the latter would be *planned*, and would enable him to rise insensibly above his lurid past and to reach a harmonious development in a perfected society.

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POPULATION

Pitt-Rivers. G. H. L. F., B.Sc. (Editor).
Problems of Population. London,
 1932. Allen and Unwin. Pp. 378.
 Price 15s.

THIS is the report of the second general assembly of the International Union for the Scientific Investigation of Population Problems, which was held in London in 1931. The proceedings of the first assembly, which was held in Geneva, were published unofficially; this volume has been edited by Captain G. H. L. F. Pitt-Rivers, the honorary general secretary. The editor has done his best with a difficult task. But the contents are very unequal in value and in manner of presentation. To take the last point first, some of the contributions are given in the form of such brief sum-

maries as to be of little value in their present shape, whatever may be the value of the originals from which the summaries are made. As to the first point, one or two contributions contain new material and represent contributions of definite importance; others are accounts of work published elsewhere, while others again are in the nature of discussions of certain topics. The contents are divided into five sections and represent the proceedings of the five sessions, each of which were devoted to a special aspect of the field. At the end come the reports of the research commissions and of the national committees.

What opinion will those who read this volume form of the value of the Union? Has it justified its existence? It seems clear that it has subsidized some valuable pieces of research. No doubt if more money had been available, it could have done more in this direction. But it has used its limited resources well. It is more difficult to form an opinion about the value of the general assembly and of the reports of its proceedings. At what do these assemblies aim—at bringing workers in the same field together, at advancing research or at educating the public? All these objects cannot be achieved together, and unless it is clear to the minds of the organizers what the aim is, it is likely that nothing satisfactory will be accomplished. If the public is to be interested and instructed, it will not be by confabulations of experts; special modes of approach must be found. If research is to be advanced, it is not likely that experts will keep their results in storage until an assembly comes along. On the other hand, there is definite advantage in meeting fellow workers, and it may be suggested that for such meetings the best programme is one of a series of discussions. A number of topics might be chosen, each centring round some unresolved problem of interest; if the opening of the discussion was placed in capable hands and the rest of the proceedings carefully managed, the result would be stimulating and valuable—far more so than listening either to summaries of published work or to new material,

perhaps related to a minor point, the true significance of which in any case it is difficult to grasp at a first hearing.

The truth is that the best mechanism for these international assemblies has not yet been discovered. It is urgent that we should discover it because it is clear that international organizations have most useful functions to perform. In addition to

the raising and disposing of funds and of bringing experts together, these assemblies can contribute to the solution of the world problems of migration and so on, because they can contribute to the formation of an international outlook in the absence of which these matters will never be peaceably settled.

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